

WASHINGTON (June 27) – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6), Congresswoman Terri Sewell (AL-7), and Congressman Robert Aderholt (AL-6) say efforts to rebuild rental housing destroyed by tornadoes in Tuscaloosa and other communities are being held back by a bureaucratic discrepancy

The three Alabama delegation members said a disaster relief formula used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is having the unintended effect of diverting recovery assistance away from rental housing needs. They urged HUD to revise the program to ensure equitable treatment for rental housing construction

Mayor Walt Maddox has said the problem is acute in Tuscaloosa, which lost hundreds of rental housing units during the tornadoes of April 27, 2011.

According to a study by the Mayor's office, one census tract in Tuscaloosa suffered damage to 463 housing units, including 440 rental units. The full extent of the devastation to the housing stock, including the many rental units destroyed, has not been reflected in the sampling model that HUD uses to distribute recovery aid. The result in Tuscaloosa has been less available funding to rebuild storm-ravaged neighborhoods.

Congressman Bachus said, "Rental housing provides safe and habitable shelter for citizens in Tuscaloosa and other communities. A key to Tuscaloosa's continuing economic recovery will be restoring the lost supply of housing. Unfortunately, critical rental housing needs are going unmet because of the way that damage is being calculated and we are working to change that."

Congresswoman Sewell (AL-7) said, "The devastation and destruction caused by last year's tornadoes across the state of Alabama is still being felt, particularly in areas that were already economically disadvantaged. We must continue to work with HUD to ensure Tuscaloosa and other affected communities receive adequate funds to help repair and rebuild rental housing units that provide critical shelter for women, children and families. Restoring the city's housing options is critical to Tuscaloosa's economic growth and development."

Congressman Aderholt (AL-4) said, "This flawed policy is ultimately hindering Tuscaloosa's

ongoing recovery efforts. In fact, under HUD's current disaster relief formula any community with a major college or university that has a high ratio of rental housing will suffer. HUD needs to come up with a real public-private partnership policy which meets the needs of those left homeless by the storms in Tuscaloosa."

Bachus and Sewell today spoke on the House floor in favor of an amendment to redirect \$200 million in the proposed HUD budget to rebuilding rental housing in storm-damaged communities unfairly disadvantaged by the current flawed formula.

While the measure was not added to the bill, the delegation members said they will continue to press for changes to ensure that that rental housing is replaced in Tuscaloosa and other affected communities.

To view excerpt from Congressman Bachus' floor remarks, [click here](#) .